

7 Tips to Bring Scripture to Life for Young Children

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1. Choose an illustrated children's Bible.

Engage young children with a richly-illustrated and colorful Bible. For these early readers, pictures work together with text to tell a story. The more interesting and captivating the art for children at this age, the better! Before they can read, children rely on illustrations to make connections and understand what is happening in a text. If you do not have an illustrated children's Bible available, share the stories orally and encourage family members to illustrate them using art materials in the home or classroom.

2. Enliven stories with a flannel board.

A flannel board is very simply a board covered in flannel. A flannel board can be purchased inexpensively from many school supply retailers or can be made from easy to find materials. (Staple flannel over a ready-made canvas in any desired size.) Images and objects cut from felt then cling to the flannel board. Find or design felt figures and pictures to enact Scripture stories on the board for young children.



3. Encourage budding actors.

A reader's theater activity is wonderful for young children. Choose a simple parable or story to act out as a play. Get a few props and keep the speaking lines simple. Practice extensively before the performance. If desired, invite family members, other classes, or neighbors over for a live performance! Or, record the performance to share at a later time.



4. Make finger puppets.

After sharing a Scripture story, talk about the characters. Together, design finger puppets or use face paint to paint simple characters on a child's finger. Have children act out stories in small scale. This can be done independently or in small groups in both the home or classroom setting.

5. Make use of community resources.

Visit your parish, school, or local library and explore a multitude of illustrated Bible stories to read with your child. Compare the same stories across different texts. Talk about the stories and the illustrations.



6. Design paper dolls.

Work together to design paper dolls of figures from Scripture stories. Use any available art supplies. Paper dolls can be as simple or as complex as you and your children choose. Color, paint, glue, and cut out figurines. These dolls can be used again and again to enact Scripture stories. As you read about new figures from Scripture, add to your paper doll collection! If children express interest in this method, they can also create sets for the dolls.

7. Spell it out.

Use magnetic letters to spell names from Scripture (for example God, Jesus, Mary) or key words (such as bread, fish, calm, storm, heal, blind). When you spell a word and the child is able to sound it out, ask the child to retell the story to you orally.



